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BCStats

Infoline

Contact: bcstats.infoline@gov.bc.ca *Issue: 10-36* *September 10th, 2010*

- **Unemployment rate inches down to 7.3% in August**
- **Exports drop 4.8% in July**
- **Housing starts soar in August, rising 23.2%**

Labour Force

- **British Columbia's unemployment rate inched down 0.2 percentage points to 7.3% (*seasonally adjusted*) in August.** The slight decrease in the rate was the result of job growth (+5,400, up 0.2% from July), paired with relatively no change in the size of the labour force.

  Employment in goods-producing industries declined slightly (-1.3%), pulled down by job losses in construction (-2.5%) and manufacturing (-2.6%). In the service sector, employment showed more strength (+0.6%), as health care and social assistance (+6.3%) and finance, real estate, & leasing (+6.0%) took on more workers. Job losses in other industries, including business, building & other support services (-9.2%) transportation & warehousing (-4.9%), and accommodation & food services (-3.3%) mitigated much of the increase.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **Among the regions, jobless rates ranged from 6.4% (*3-month moving average, unadjusted*) in Vancouver Island/Coast to 10.8% in North Coast/Nechako.** Kootenay (10.2%) was the only other region where the unemployment rate was in the double digits. However, jobless rates have been climbing in many other parts of the province, and were also well above the provincial average in Cariboo (8.4%).

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **Canada's unemployment rate edged up in August, rising to 8.1% (+0.1 percentage point *seasonally adjusted*).** The increase was the result of labour force growth (+0.3%) that slightly outpaced job gains (+0.2%) at the national level. Unemployment rates rose in most parts of the country. While BC's rate was the highest in western Canada, it was only slightly more than Alberta's (6.5%). Saskatchewan (4.8%) and Manitoba (5.6%) continued to boast the lowest jobless rates in the country.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **This year's summer labour market appears to have been a challenging one for job-seeking students.** Between May and August, the average unemployment rate (*unadjusted*) among students (aged 15 to 24) who were attending school full-time in March and planning to return to school in the fall was 17.7%, notably higher than in the summer of the previous two years (16.0% in 2009 and 10.6% in 2008).

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **The jobless rate among BC's off-reserve Aboriginal youth was considerably lower this summer than in the summer of 2009.** The unemployment rate among Aboriginal youth (aged 15 to 24) was 20.5% in August (*3-month moving average, unadjusted*), down from 23.6% over the same months of 2009. However, the primary reason for the improvement in the jobless rate was lower labour force participation among Aboriginal youth.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

The Economy

- **The value of BC origin exports declined (-4.8% *seasonally adjusted*) in July, ending a nine-month run of advances.** There was an 8.4% slump in exports of forest products, while shipments of industrial and consumer goods (-7.6%) and energy products (-2.1%) also dropped. Agriculture and fish products bucked the trend with shipments climbing 1.6%. Exports to the US were down substan-

Report **Fifty Years of BC Exports: 1959-2009**

Did you know...

More than half (52%) of post-secondary students in BC plan to work during the school year.

Data Source: Ipsos Canada

tially (-8.3%). Double-digit downturns in the forestry (-13.7%) and energy (-16.0%) sectors had the most impact. A moderate increase in exports of machinery, equipment & automotive goods (+2.2%) south of the border was unable to offset the declines. Shipments to destinations other than the US were also off (-1.4%), largely because of a 15.5% decrease in exports of industrial & consumer products.

Canadian exports (-0.7%) continued to slide in July. Shipments to the United States were down 2.2%, a decline which was moderated by increased exports to the European Union (+18.0%) and Japan (+0.2%).

Data Source: Statistics Canada & BC Stats

- **Housing starts in the province showed continued volatility in August, soaring 23.2% (*seasonally adjusted*), reversing a 15.2% slip in the previous month.** Canadian starts were down 3.0%, with many provinces posting double-digit declines. Nova Scotia (-51.7%) recorded the most substantial decrease, but a 15.5% downturn in Quebec had the biggest impact. Along with BC, starts were up notably in Ontario (+15.7%), PEI (+25.0%), Saskatchewan (+35.8%). *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **The cost of new housing in BC's biggest metropolitan centre continued to climb in July.** Vancouver's New Housing Price Index was 4.5% higher than in July 2009, while new housing costs in the capital region were relatively unchanged (+0.1%). Among the 21 metropolitan areas surveyed, only three registered 12-month declines in July. The national index continued to climb (+2.9%). Toronto, Oshawa and Vancouver were the main contributors to the overall increase. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **The value of building permits issued in British Columbia was up 2.3% (*seasonally adjusted*) in July, as a surge in planned spending on non-residential (+47.2%) projects offset a 15.4% decrease in the value of residential permits.** In Kelowna, permits rose 54.6%, one of the most significant gains in the country, while Abbotsford-Mission (+22.9%) and Vancouver (+1.2%) also posted increases. Victoria (+0.0%), on the other hand, saw no change from the previous month.

  Nationally, permits fell 3.3% with declines in other provinces ranging from 3.7% in Quebec to 62.2 % in Newfoundland & Labrador. Other than BC, only Manitoba, (+3.7%) Ontario (+7.5%) and Saskatchewan (23.1%) reported increases in July. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Year-to-date, building permits in the province were 41.7% higher than in the first seven months of 2009.** Increases were seen in most regions, including Mainland/Southwest (+61.9%), where the jump in the value of permits reflected significantly higher spending on residential projects. A 12.7% boost in Vancouver Island/Coast was also concentrated in the residential sector. The only region to post a decline was North Coast (-5.6%), where the value of institutional permits plummeted.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada & BC Stats

Firearms

- **As of June 2010, there were 920,389 registered firearms in British Columbia**. The province had approximately 213,403 valid firearms licence holders, suggesting an average of 4.3 guns per registered owner. BC has the lowest number of firearms per capita in Western Canada (22,368 per 100,000 population), well below the national average (23,770). Among the provinces, Saskatchewan has the highest rate of registered firearms (43,961 per 100,000 people), while PEI has the lowest (17,602). Nationwide, the number of registered guns reached 7.5 million in June, approximately 95,300 more than recorded in the same month last year. Nearly 2 million Canadians are licensed firearms holders. Last year, the initial application screening led to the refusal of 515 firearms licence applications and continuous-eligibility screening led to the revocation of 2,084 firearms licences.

  Data Source: RCMP Canadian Firearms Program

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For data originating from Statistics Canada, data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the catalogue number.

Contact: Dan Schrier
(250) 387-0376
originally published in:
Exports, Issue:10-06

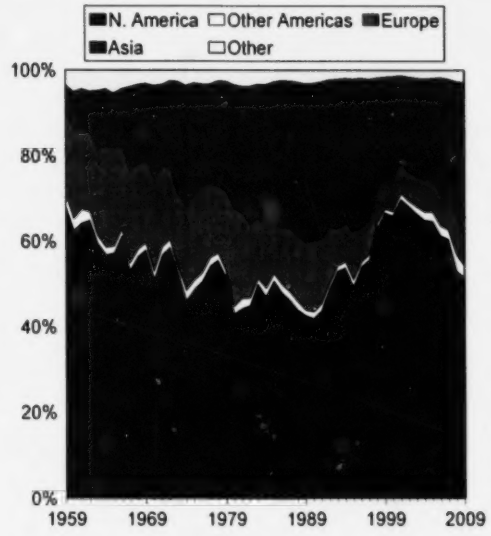
Fifty Years of BC Exports: 1959-2009

The composition of British Columbia commodity exports and the markets for those goods have undergone significant change over the last fifty years. Both the types of goods exported and the destination of those goods have become more diversified over time.

One thing that hasn't changed is the fact that British Columbia's largest market for exports remains the United States, but the percentage of shipments destined for that country has fluctuated over time. In 1959, roughly 68% of BC's commodity exports were shipped to the United States, compared to only 51% in 2009. From 1959 through 1990, shipments to the US trended down, reaching a low of 42% in 1990. As the tariff walls between Canada and the United States came down in the wake of the free trade agreement between the two countries, trade with the United States started to increase, both for BC and the rest of Canada. The combination of lower tariffs on BC products and a slumping Canadian dollar helped drive the American share of BC's exports up to a peak of almost 70% in 2001, before a higher dollar and a growing trade with Mainland China brought that ratio down to just over half of BC's overall exports.

The portion of BC's exports shipped to Asian destinations has climbed from only 7% in 1959 to almost 36% in 2009. Most of that increase was in trade to Japan, at least until the late 1990s, when Japan's economy slumped and its demand for BC's products also fell. BC's exports to Japan have never fully recovered from that decline, at least in terms of market share. From a peak of about 28% in 1990, Japan's share of BC's exports was only 14% in 2009.

There has been significant variation in the destination of BC's exports over the last 50 years



Source: BC Stats / Statistics Canada

In recent years, other Asian destinations have picked up the slack from Japan, particularly Mainland China. The value of BC exports to China jumped 325% from 1999 to 2009, such that China ranked third as a destination for BC exports in 2009 behind only the United States and Japan. South Korea and Taiwan ranked fourth and fifth respectively.

Top Five Destinations for BC Origin Exports, 1959 and 2009 ($Millions)

1959		2009	
United States	508.1	United States	12,904.4
United Kingdom	110.4	Japan	3,460.4
Japan	28.6	China	2,477.5
Australia	13.7	South Korea	1,662.3
Germany	13.7	Taiwan	463.1
Total	750.0	Total	25,087.9

Source: BC Stats / Statistics Canada

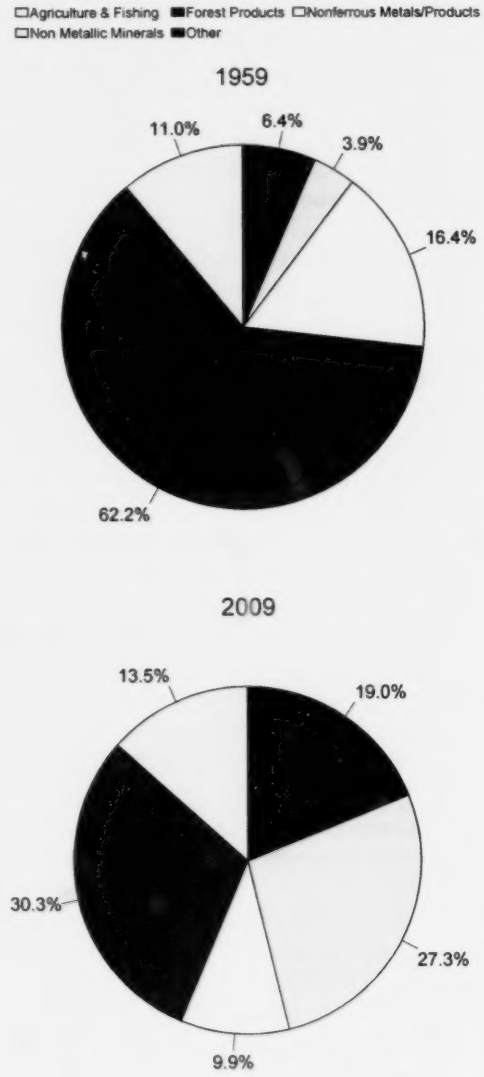
In 1959, Japan was the only Asian country ranked in the top five destinations for BC origin exports. It was ranked third behind the US and the United Kingdom. Australia and Germany rounded out the top five.

While the markets for BC's exports have changed significantly, the types of goods exported have undergone an even greater transformation. In 1959, forest products dominated BC's exports, comprising 62% of shipments to international destinations. This compares to just over 30% in 2009. Nonferrous metals and products thereof made up just over 16% of BC's exports in 1959, compared to only 10% fifty years later. BC's exports were far more diversified in 2009 and forest products were nowhere near as dominant. For example, exports of coal, natural gas and other non-metallic minerals[1] (27%) were almost equal that of forest products in 2009, whereas in 1959 they comprised only 4% of overall BC exports.

While resource-based commodities still make up a large portion of BC's exports, other goods, such as machinery and equipment and other manufactured goods, have become more important. This can be seen by the growth in the "other" category from just over 6% in 1959 to 19% in 2009.

There are a number of reasons for the transformation of BC's exports over the last five decades including changing markets, competition from countries in some product lines where there was none before and the evolution of new products and practises. It is inevitable that the types of goods BC produces and exports and the countries to which it ships these products will continue to change over time, such that fifty years from now, BC's export profile may have changed even more radically than it has over the last fifty years.

The compositon of BC's exports has changed substantially in the last 50 years



Source: BC Stats / Statistics Canada

[1] For simplicity, electricity is included in this category along with other energy products such as coal and natural gas even though electricity is clearly not a mineral.

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A Public Use Microdata File (PUMF) is a sample of survey responses that are anonymous, primarily non-aggregated, and have been scrutinized for confidentiality. As many variables as possible are provided in order to maintain the analytical value of the file. PUMF users can construct the tables they need, rather than choosing from pre-tabulated information.

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BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Apr 1/2010	% change on one year ago
BC	4,510.9	1.6
Canada	34,019.0	1.2
GDP and INCOME (Revised Nov 9)		
(BC - at market prices)	2008	% change on one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	197,931	3.3
GDP *($ 2002 millions)*	164,520	0.0
GDP *($ 2002 per Capita) (reflects revised pop)*	37,529	-1.7
Personal Disposable Income *($ 2002 per Capita)*	25,931	3.2
TRADE ($ millions, seasonally adjusted)		% change on prev. month
Manufacturing Shipments - Jun 2010	3,007	2.1
Merchandise Exports - Jul 2010	2,386	-4.8
Retail Sales - Jun 2010	4,830	-0.3
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX	% change on	12-month avg
(all items - Jul 2010)	one year ago	% change
BC	2.0	0.3
Vancouver	2.5	0.6
Victoria	1.4	0.2
Canada	1.8	1.0
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on
(seasonally adjusted)	Aug 2010	prev. month
Jobs Created (Lost) - BC NEW!	5.4	
Labour Force - BC	2,502.1	0.0
Employed - BC	2,320.6	0.2
Unemployed - BC	181.5	-3.4
		Jul 2010
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	7.3	7.5
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	8.1	8.0
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Sep 8/2010	Sep 9/2009
Prime Business Rate	2.75	2.25
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	3.30	3.75
- 5 year	5.39	5.49
US-CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Sep 8/2010	Sep 9/2009
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $ per US $	1.0359	1.0787
(closing rate) US $ per Cdn $	0.9639	0.9251
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		% change on
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Aug 2010	one year ago
BC	836.22	3.7
Canada	826.47	2.3

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bankofcanada.ca

Open Data

Most data products on our site have long been available PDF format, which behaves nicely for printing but resists extraction of imbedded information. Over the past year most updates to our site have included both PDF and a more open format such as CSV or XLS. We are now revisiting our archive of about12,000 PDF files and producing matching open format versions. Our entire 2006 and 2001 Census collections are now available in both PDF and XLS. Look for continued progress through the early Fall.

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/dd/profiles.asp

Labour Force Participation Rate Projections

The model uses an entry-exit rate methodology to project age/sex-specific participation rates by age cohort—i.e., people of the same generation—for the period 2010–2036. This approach, which was pioneered by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, takes into account the wide differences in participation among cohorts and generates projections that are more plausible than the alternative age group extrapolation approach.

http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/lss/labour.asp#pubs

PEOPLE 35 Pop Projection Highlights

PEOPLE 35 (Population Extrapolation for Organizational Planning with Less Error) population projections are now available. This latest population projection covers the period 2010 to 2036, with information available for numerous provincial geographies including Local Health Area, Health Service Delivery Area, Health Authority, School District, College Region, Regional District and Development Region. Access the release article 2036 BC, which provides some PEOPLE35 highlights, or view projection details on our website (total population) or through the webstore (details age/sex projection packages).

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/pop/pop/popproj.asp

Released this week by BC Stats

- Exports, July 2010
- Labour Force Statistics, August 2010
- Earnings & Employment Trends, August 2010

Next week

- Quarterly Regional Statistics, 2nd Quarter 2010

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